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SUMMARY

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Australia

DRYING OF TREE FRUITS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DEHYDRATION AND PRE-TREATMENT WITH SULPHUR DIOXIDE

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DRYING OF TREE FRUITS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DEHYDRATION AND PRE-TREATMENT WITH SULPHUR DIOXIDE

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The Australian dried tree fruit industry, its production of 5000-7000 tons but a small part of the total world production, consists mainly of small producers, to whom technical assistance is given through a Dried Fruits Processing Committee. The principal centres of production are in southern regions where relative humidity is low and temperature high during the drying season.

Prunes and apricots constitute 75% of the production, followed in order of importance by peaches, apples, pears, nectarines and figs. Prunes are the only fruit grown specifically for drying.

All prunes and apples are dehydrated by the growers, either individually or in co-operatives, of the other fruits, though dehydration may be extending, a very high proportion is sun dried, by the growers themselves, at low cost.

In Australia the cost of dehydration is about half that of canning, while sun drying costs about 25% less than dehydration. Moreover the capital costs of sun drying and dehydration, compared with those of evan a small cannery, are low.

By drying, the washage of fresh fruits is reduced. The product is stable, inexpensive to store and transport and acceptable to many consumers.

The paper goes on to consider factors that affect the quality to be desired in new fruit that is to be dried, and certain procedures to be followed to ensure that fruit is in good condition for drying and kept in good condition during drying.

To prevent 'browning' all fruits except prunes have to be treated with sulphur dioxide. Modes of treatment are considered and one, much used in Australia, which is not only effective but simple and cheap, is suggested.

Expositions of the two methods of drying, by sun and by dehydration are follwed by advices concerning storage and packaging and the paper concludes with some remarks on the usages of dried fruits.

Before establishing fruit drying in a new area it is advisable to study meteorological data and determine whether sun drying, dehydration, or possibly a combination of them, should be adopted. Local varieties of fruit may be tested to see if, with adequate information and guidance, they can be processed into a commodity of good quality for which there is likely to be a sufficient home or export market.

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